

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested in view of the following remarks.

It is understood that the amended version of Claim 1 presented here would have been deemed to raise new issues requiring further consideration and/or search. Thus, this Amendment is being filed with a Request for Continued Examination.

The restriction of Claims 39 and 40 at paragraphs "2"-"4" of the Official Action is noted. Claim 39 is withdrawn from consideration at this time and Claim 40 is canceled.

Claim 41 is amended as suggested by the Official Action at paragraph "6", and Claim 42 is canceled. Accordingly, withdrawal of this objection is respectfully requested.

The subject matter here pertains to a guide wire comprising, *inter alia*, a wire member including first and second wires, each wire possessing an end face, and the respective end faces being welded to one another at a welded portion. A cover layer is provided on an outer periphery of the wire member and covers the welded portion. The cover layer is made of a resin material that reduces friction. A proximal-side cover layer is disposed on the proximal side from the cover layer without an axial gap between the cover layer and proximal side cover layer, and also without an axial overlap. A distal side cover layer is disposed on a distal side from the cover layer without an axial gap between the cover layer and the distal side cover layer, the cover layer and distal-side cover do not axially overlap one another, wherein the cover layer is formed such that the wire member is not heated at a time of covering the wire member with the cover layer.

Claims 1, 3, 8-14, 18-24, 26-31, 36, and 41-42 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Uchino et al ("Uchino," U.S. Patent No. 6,001,068) in view of Richardson et al ("Richardson," U.S. Patent No. 6,494,847). Uchino discloses a guide wire including first and second wires A, B, joined together at a weld. A connector 12 is slid over the joint/weld and bonded to the first and second wires A, B. A distal end portion of wire A is buried in a coating 113.

In rejecting Claim 1, the Official Action takes the position that the first and second wires A, B and the connector 12 of Uchino correspond to the claimed first and second wires and the cover layer. The Official Action correctly notes that Uchino fails to disclose a proximal side cover layer disposed on the proximal side from the cover layer without an axial gap between the cover layer and the proximal side cover layer, the cover layer and proximal side cover layer do not axially overlap one another.

Addressing other claimed subject matter, the Official Action took the position that the coating 113 in Uchino is a distal side cover layer, though this coating 113 is not disposed without an axial gap and without axial overlap relative to the cover layer.

The Official Action relies on Richardson for its disclosure of various cover layers. Richardson discloses a guide wire having polymer jackets positioned over distal and core sections. The guide wire 50 includes proximal 52, intermediate 54 and distal 56 core sections formed from elongated core member 58. In one embodiment, the intermediate core portion 54 has a polymeric jacket 62, the distal core portion 56 has polymeric jacket 64, and third polymeric jacket 66 bridges the intermediate core portion 54 and distal core portion 56. Richardson uses the

polymeric jackets to provide different handling characteristics for the intermediate and distal end portions of the guide wire.

In Uchino, the handling characteristics of the guide wire are dictated by the first and second wires A, B, which are formed of different materials. Specifically, the second guide wire B is provided with a greater flexural rigidity than that of the first guide A wire to improve the operating characteristics. See, for example, column 2, lines 8-45. Because Uchino already addresses the issue of providing different handling characteristics, a person of ordinary skill in the art would not look to the disclosure of Richardson for the same reason. In other words, a person having ordinary skill in the art would not look to Richardson's disclosure to solve a problem that is already addressed by Uchino.

Additionally, the disclosure in Richardson does not provide for a cover layer covering a welded portion, as recited in Claim 1. Indeed, in Richardson, there is no welded portion. Thus, an ordinarily skilled artisan, looking to improve operating characteristics of a welded guide wire would not look to the disclosure of Richardson.

Further, there is no disclosure in Richardson of how to implement the polymer jackets in Uchino. Claim 1 sets forth a specific relationship of the position of the cover layer relative to the welded portion, and the proximal side and distal side cover layers. Because Richardson fails to disclose a weld, it cannot be said that this reference provides guidance about positioning the disclosed polymer jackets relative to a welded portion. Thus, an ordinarily skilled artisan would not glean from Richardson's disclosure where and how to implement the polymer jackets in Uchino, in such a way to arrive at the claimed arrangement. For at least these reasons, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

New Claims 43 and 44 are presented for consideration. No new matter is added. These claims are supported at least by Fig. 3 and paragraph [0107]-[0110] of the U.S. Publication of this Application.

New Claim 43 provides that the cover layer has an entire outer surface that is devoid of grooves. In Uchino, the connector 12 includes grooves on its outer surface. New Claim 44 provides for the distal-side cover layer to be separate from the cover layer, and form a joint with the cover layer. The joint is positioned about a tapered portion of the first wire. In Uchino, there is no joint between the coating 113 and the connector 12. Even if the two were joined, they would not be joined a tapered portion of the wire A. For at least these reasons, new Claims 43 and 44 are allowable.

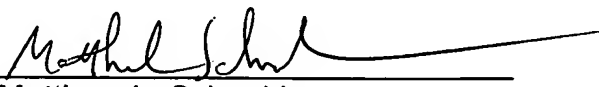
The remaining claims not specifically addressed ultimately depend from Claim 1, which is allowable. For at least this reason, these dependent claims are also allowable.

Should any questions arise in connection with this application or should the Examiner believe that a telephone conference with the undersigned would be helpful in resolving any remaining issues pertaining to this application the undersigned respectfully requests that he be contacted at the number indicated below.

Respectfully submitted,

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